Met Office

NEWS

Wintry weather triggers amber warnings

Author: Press Office
10:21 (UTC) on Fri 14 Dec 2018

Amber Severe Weather Warnings for snow and ice, highlighting the risk of freezing rain, for parts of central and northern England, as well as much of Scotland on Saturday.

People are being urged to take extra care when travelling on one of the busiest weekends in the lead up to Christmas.

There are also several Yellow Weather Warnings for medium impacts in place for parts of Northern Ireland and southwestern areas of the UK, with strong winds and heavy rain bringing potential disruption to these areas on Saturday. Met Éireann has named this system Storm Deirdre. Severe gales are forecast for the far north of Scotland, as well as Orkney and Shetland late Sunday.

Heavy snowfall is expected for parts of Scotland, whilst further south in Scotland, as well as parts of central and northern England, freezing rain is forecast.

Chief Meteorologist Will Lang said, “Saturday’s weather brings a range of winter hazards with very dangerous travelling conditions likely in some places. In addition to snow, freezing rain will bring widespread ice to northern England and Scotland on Saturday afternoon.

“Freezing rain forms when rain freezes on impact as it hits a cold surface – it is quite rare in the UK and when it does occur, the impacts can be severe. Many will know it as black ice and the danger is it forms quickly, is difficult to see and is incredibly slippery. Where it does occur, this will make walking, cycling and driving challenging, so we are urging people to check the latest weather forecast and warnings and to take extra care when walking and driving.”

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson said: “This is the first significant weather warning of the Christmas period, and we are likely to see dangerous travelling conditions. People should heed the warnings of the potential for freezing rain and ice in particular.

“I would encourage people in the affected areas to consider whether they need to make their journey. If they do, they should expect disruption. Drivers should plan their routes, leave plenty of time, follow Police Scotland travel advice and drive to the conditions."

National Winter and Severe Weather Team Leader, Paul Furlong said “Gritters will be out treating our roads around the clock, however freezing rain can cause black ice to form very rapidly and preparations may not prevent incidents occurring.

“It is essential to keep your distance and reduce your speed - black ice is difficult to see, so even when conditions seem normal, it can be very slippery leading to very dangerous driving conditions. Drivers should plan their journeys, monitor weather reports and pack a winter kit of blankets, food, water and a shovel.”

Also on Saturday, strong winds and heavy rain will affect parts of Northern Ireland, southern England and south Wales. Chief Meteorologist Will Lang continued: “Low pressure across Ireland will bring winds of 50-60mph and the risk of severe gales in coastal areas. The strong winds and risk of flooding from heavy rain has the potential to affect festive events in the lead up to Christmas.”

“The good news is following the disruptive weather on Saturday, things will settle down through Sunday, with lighter winds and dry, bright weather for many.”

Keep up to date with the forecast on our forecast pages and by following us on Twitter and Facebook, as well as using our mobile app which is available for iPhone from the App store and for Android from the Google Play store.

Met Office
© Crown Copyright